Visit of Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister to New Delhi

357. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wu Dawei visited New Delhi, recently for stragegic talk with India;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement, if any, reached as a result of the talks; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) During the talks, both sides had in-depth exchange of views on important regional and global issues that shape the present international environment. Substantive discussions took place on bilateral relations, including in particular on preparations for the forthcoming visit on the Chinese Premier to India later this year. Both sides noted with satisfaction recent positive trends in bilateral relations and reiterated their desire to improve the relationship at all levels and in all areas while addressing the outstanding differences, including the boundary question, in a fair, reasonable and mutually satisfactory manner.

Visit of UN Peace Keeping Operations' officials to New Delhi

358. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the UN Under Secretary General for Peace Keeping Operations visited New Delhi in Janaury this year;

(b) if so, whether the UN official sought any additional deployment or augmentation of India's contribution to the existing UN Peace Keeping Force;

(c) if so, the details thereof, and

(d) Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir. Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno,

Under Secretary-General of United Nations for Peace Keeping visited India on 10-11 January, 2005.

(b) No Sir, Mr. Guehenno did not seek any additional deployment or augmentation of India's contribution to UN Peace Keeping.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Assistance to Iraq

359. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received request from the Government of Iraq for assistance in its reconstruction efforts particularly in the field of construction, engineering, oil exploration, Information Technology, etc; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Government of Iraq has requested us for manpower training in various fields.

(b) Government has been assisting Iraq in the reconstruction work through development of its human resources by providing training in India to Iraqi officials in wide-ranging areas including diplomacy, infromation technology, industrial electronics and instrumentation, agro-industry, entrepreneurship development, management development, human resource planning and development, promotion of micro enterprises, industrial project preparation, etc.

Issuance of passports in Andhra Pradesh

360. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued in the Andhra Pradesh in 2003-04 and 2004-05;

(b) what steps are being taken to issue passports with more ease in this area;

(c) whether there is any possibility of opening new passport offices in the State; and

(d) the steps proposed to expand and increase the capacity of such passport offices in the State?